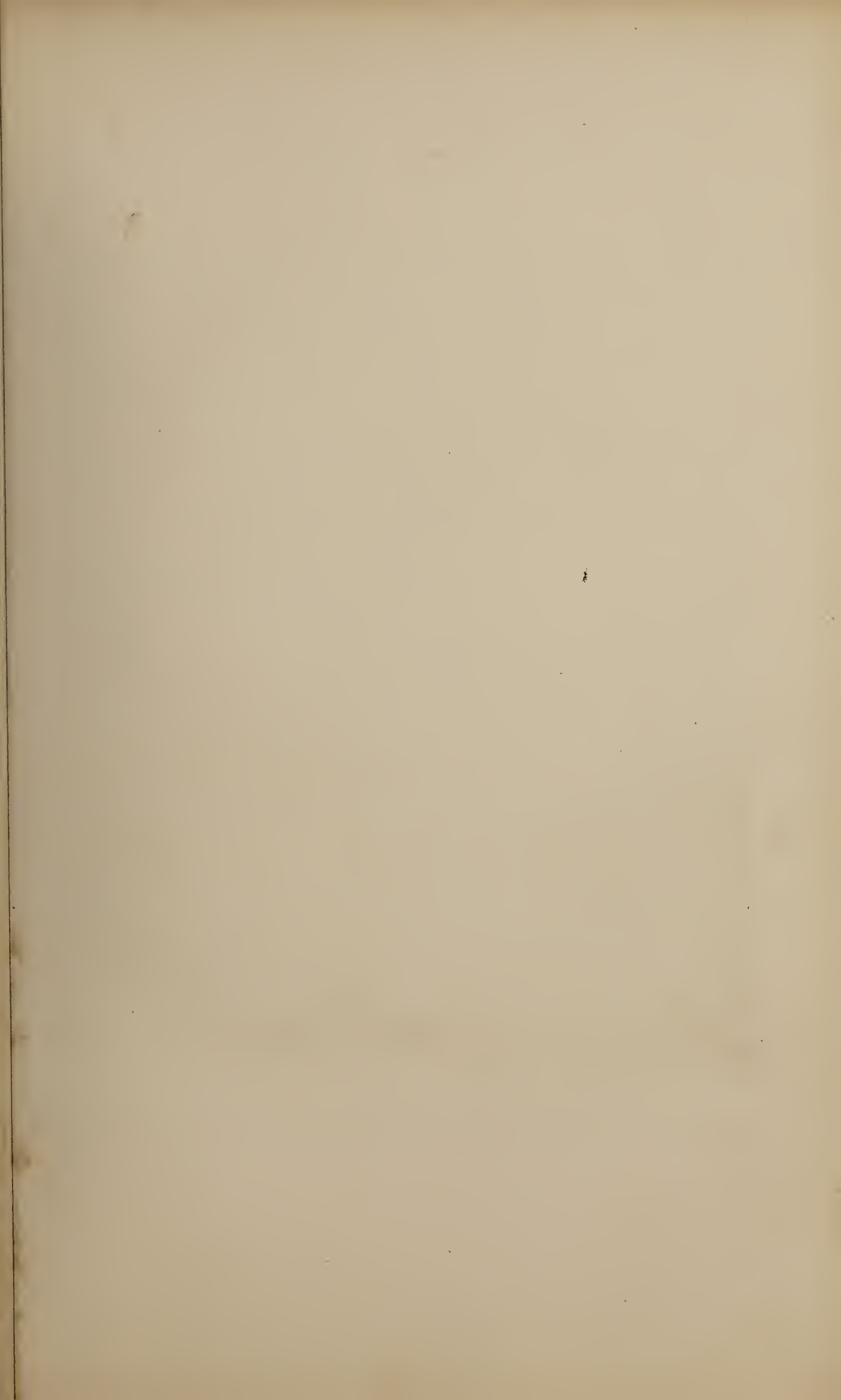




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ARCHIVAL
CENTER

LAYING THE CORNER-STONE
OF THE
NEW LIBRARY BUILDING.



PROCEEDINGS

ON THE OCCASION OF

LAYING THE CORNER-STONE

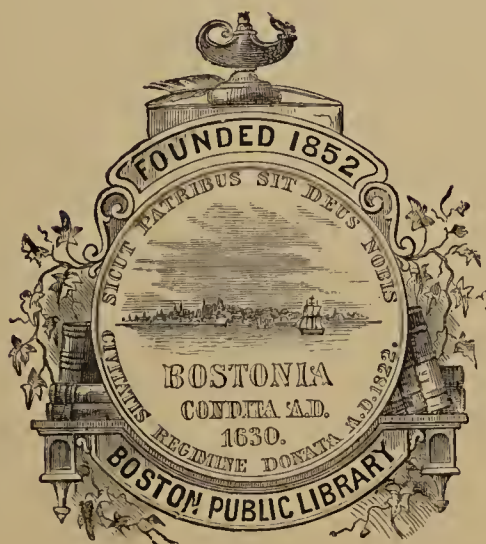
OF THE

NEW LIBRARY BUILDING

OF THE

CITY OF BOSTON.

NOVEMBER 28, 1888.



BOSTON:

PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE CITY COUNCIL.

MDCCCLXXXIX.



CITY OF BOSTON.

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN, Sept. 16, 1889.

Ordered, That the Superintendent of Printing be authorized to have printed, as a Memorial volume, fifteen hundred copies of the Account of the Proceedings at the Laying of the Corner-Stone of the New Library building, on Dartmouth street, and that each member of the City Council be furnished with ten copies; the expense thus incurred to be charged to the appropriation for Printing.

Passed. Sent down for concurrence.

EDWIN U. CURTIS,
City Clerk.

IN COMMON COUNCIL, Sept. 19, 1889.

Concurred.

HORACE G. ALLEN,
President.

Approved September 21, 1889.

THOMAS N. HART,
Mayor.

A true copy.

Attest:

JOHN T. PRIEST,
Assistant City Clerk.

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PROCEEDINGS.

PROCEEDINGS.

THE corner-stone of the new Public Library building of the city of Boston, to be erected on Boylston street, St. James avenue, and Copley square, was laid on the twenty-eighth day of November, 1888.

On the 27th of September, the following communication was received by the Mayor of the city, from the Trustees of the Public Library:—

PUBLIC LIBRARY,

BOSTON, September 27, 1888.

TO HIS HONOR HUGH O'BRIEN, *Mayor of Boston*:—

DEAR SIR,—I am instructed by the Trustees of the Public Library to inform you that the work upon the new building is so far advanced that the “corner-stone” can be laid at any time after the twenty-fifth day of November next.

As it has been customary to commemorate such events by appropriate exercises, the Trustees presume it is expected that the corner-stone of an edifice which will not only be an attractive ornament to Boston, but an object of constant interest to our citizens, will be laid with such ceremonies as the gravity of the occasion and the dignity of the city demand.

Appointed agents of the Municipal Government to erect a building to contain the books which public and private

liberality has wisely provided for the public use and enjoyment,—for our Library is a *Library for the people*,—the Trustees venture the suggestion that His Honor the Mayor and the City Council, who have always manifested the greatest interest in the success of the work, and rendered most valuable assistance in its prosecution, should not only take the leading part in the celebration, but suggest the arrangements. They therefore respectfully invite the attention of the City Government to the matter, that such action may be taken therein as may seem proper.

The Trustees suggest that Wednesday, November 28, might be a convenient day for the celebration; they defer, however, to the judgment of the City Government as to the time, as well as to the exercises of the occasion, and respectfully solicit a conference with yourself and those who may be selected to represent the City Council in respect to the same.

Very respectfully,

FREDERICK O. PRINCE,

President pro tem.

Trustees of the Public Library City of Boston.

At a meeting of the Board of Aldermen, on the 1st day of October, the above letter was communicated to the City Council by His Honor the Mayor, and was referred to the Joint Committee on the Public Library, comprising —

MESSRS. OTIS EDDY,

JOHN C. SHORT,

SAMUEL KELLY,

EDWARD J. POWERS,

MESSRS. JOHN J. TEEVENS,

WILLIAM R. RICHARDS,

WILLIAM G. REED,

THOMAS F. KEENAN.

Arrangements were made by the committee and the Trustees, by which the exercises on the occasion should take place at the new Old South Church, on Boylston street, the use of this beautiful edifice having been tendered for the occasion by the society.

A large company, comprising representatives of the several departments of the State and city governments, the present and past Trustees of the Library, the ex-mayors of the city, many members of the clergy, and of the various religious, literary, scientific, and benevolent societies, with ladies and other invited guests, assembled at the church at 12 o'clock, noon, of Wednesday, November 28, 1889, the time appointed for the ceremonies.

The President of the Board of Trustees, SAMUEL A. B. ABBOTT, Esq., upon taking the chair as presiding officer, spoke as follows:—

MR. MAYOR, GENTLEMEN OF THE CITY COUNCIL, AND FELLOW-CITIZENS:—In behalf of the Trustees of the Public Library, who have been charged with the erection of the new Public Library building, I have the honor to report that the work committed to them is so far advanced that the corner-stone will be laid to-day. Owing to the magnitude and importance of the building, it was deemed proper to invite you, Mr. Mayor, as the chief magistrate of the city,

to lay that stone with appropriate ceremonies. But, before proceeding to the work in hand, I shall, in accordance with the time-honored custom of this community, request the Rev. Dr. Gordon to invoke Divine blessing upon the undertaking.

The REV. DR. GEORGE A. GORDON, pastor of the Old South Church, offered the following

PRAYER.

Almighty God, we thank Thee that Thou art Light, and that in Thy light men see light; we thank Thee that Thou art the Father of Lights, from whom cometh every perfect gift, and that Thou hast given Him, in whom is life, and whose life is the light of men.

We rejoice in the gifts of reason and conscience and memory and imagination and feeling with which Thou hast endowed Thy children. We rejoice that Thou hast led men, in all generations, into deep and wonderful knowledge of God and of themselves, and of God's world of power and beauty. We rejoice in all the processes of life in the souls of men, in all the devout and noble experiences into which Thou hast brought them. We thank Thee for the affluent life of mankind, and we thank Thee for its varied and abundant utterance. We thank

Thee for books, and for the Divine Book as the test and interpreter of all others. We praise Thee for the preservation of the recorded wisdom of the world, and that in this earthen vessel we have a treasure from above.

We ask Thy blessing upon the institution founded a generation ago, and perpetuated in our midst, through wisdom and self-sacrifice, in ever-increasing influence and usefulness. We thank Thee that it is under public care; that our beloved city, in the person of its chief magistrate, is here to own and cherish and bless it as it looks toward the future. May the present enterprise, in extension of its power for good among our fellow-citizens, receive, and continue to receive, public support and Divine favor. Make knowledge and wisdom the stability of our times. And may the corner-stone of this building be laid upon Him, who, in the temple of life, is the chief corner-stone, and upon whom whatsoever is founded shall in nowise be diverted from its benign purpose. Let this vast structure rise a memorial of our reverence for the wisdom of the past. Let it stand a memorial of our city's enlightened interest in all within its borders: a memorial of the public conviction that knowledge leads to righteousness

and peace, and a monument to the faith of the fathers, inherited by the children, in Him who has been our dwelling-place in all generations, from Whom are all things, by Whom are all things, and unto Whom are all things, God over all blessed forever. Amen.

PRESIDENT ABBOTT then stated that our distinguished fellow-citizen, DR. HOLMES, had kindly written a poem for the occasion, which he would read.

POEM.

BY DR. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

P O E M .

BY DR. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

Proudly, beneath her glittering dome,
Our three-hilled city greets the morn;
Here Freedom found her virgin home, —
The Bethlehem where her babe was born.

The lordly roofs of traffic rise
Amid the smoke of household fires;
High o'er them in the peaceful skies,
Faith points to heaven her clustering spires.

Can Freedom breathe if ignorance reign?
Shall Commerce thrive where anarchs rule?
Will Faith her half-fledged brood retain,
If darkening counsels cloud the school?

Let in the light! from every age
Some gleams of garnered wisdom pour,
And, fixed on thought's electric page,
Wait all their radiance to restore.

Let in the light! on diamond mines
Their gems invite the hand that delves, —
So learning's treasured jewels shine,
Ranged on the alcove's ordered shelves.

From history's scroll the splendor streams,
From science leaps the living ray,
Flashed from the poet's glowing dreams
The opal fires of fancy play.

Let in the light! these windowed walls
Shall brook no shadowing colonnades,
But day shall flood the silent halls
Till o'er yon hills the sunset fades.

Behind the ever-open gate
No pikes shall fence a crumbling throne,
No lackeys cringe, no courtiers wait, —
This palace is the people's own!

Heirs of our narrow-girdled past,
How fair the prospect we survey,
Where howled unheard the wintry blast
And rolled unchecked the storm-swept bay!

These chosen precincts, set apart
For learned toil and holy shrines,
Yield willing homes to every art
That trains or strengthens or refines.

Here shall their sceptred mistress reign,
Who heeds her meanest subjects call,
Sovereign of all their vast domain —
The queen — the handmaid of them all.

Selections by the orchestra followed, after which Mr. ABBOTT said that an address would be made by the HONORABLE FREDERICK O. PRINCE, in behalf of the TRUSTEES OF THE PUBLIC LIBRARY, on delivering the Trowel to HIS HONOR· THE MAYOR.

ADDRESS.

BY HON. FREDERICK O. PRINCE.

ADDRESS BY MR. PRINCE.

MR. PRESIDENT, MR. MAYOR, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN: — When in January, 1855, the Board of Commissioners, on the erection of the Public Library building, issued notice for designs for the edifice, they required that the “building be completely and absolutely *fire-proof* ;” that provision be made to guard against *dampness* ; that every part of the building be well *lighted* ; that the best mode of *heating and ventilating* be provided; that there should be a library hall capable of containing at least *two hundred thousand* volumes; a general reading-room, with ample accommodations for at least *one hundred and fifty* readers; a special reading-room for ladies, with seats for fifty persons; a room for delivery of books to borrowers, with accommodations for at least *two hundred* persons; a trustees’ room and a librarian’s room.

Designs were made which claimed to satisfy these requirements, and the building erected.

On the first day of January, 1858, it was dedicated. Mr. Winthrop, the President of the

Board of Commissioners, in his address upon delivering the keys to the Mayor, observed: "That we had a convenient, substantial, and spacious structure, entirely adapted to its purposes, and carefully arranged for the most economical administration of the institution for which it was intended. Capacious enough for two or three hundred thousand volumes, and for as many readers as are ever likely to visit it at one and the same time, with no deficiency of light and air, and secure, we have full confidence, from the dangers of fire."

The building, with the land, cost about three hundred and sixty thousand dollars. It seemed at the time so spacious, and the cost so great, that the President of the Board of Commissioners felt called to explain their action in the matter, and earnestly impressed upon the citizens that the edifice "was emphatically for the use and enjoyment of *all* the inhabitants of Boston," and not like the City Hall, the Court-house, and other public buildings, for a part of them; and in vindication of the cost he eloquently said: "Which one of us is disposed to maintain that the people of Boston in this day and generation ought to have been content with a cheaper and more ordinary edifice, for a purpose common to

them all and preëminently dear to all their hearts; which one of us is ready to assume the ground that the building is too good for its objects, or too good for its rightful occupants and owners? I rather begin to fear that it may not be considered good enough."

As the citizens felt a deep interest in the Library, the action of the Commissioners in constructing a building so complete and capacious was indorsed and approved.

Who of those present at the dedication imagined that the claims of the Commissioners in respect to the fitness of the building for the purpose for which it was erected, however just they seemed at the time, would be found after the short period of *twelve* years almost wholly unfounded? Experience soon showed that it was *not* sufficiently "capacious and spacious" for the officers and employés of the Library and its fast-increasing books and readers,—a large lot of adjoining land was therefore purchased in 1872 for additional accommodations; that it was *not* "entirely adapted to its purposes and arranged for the most economical administration of the institution," for shortly afterwards, in 1874, the building was enlarged on its south side to obtain conveniences which had become necessary; that

it was *not* "capacious enough for all the readers," for it could accommodate but a small part of them; that it had few, if any, facilities for students and scholars desiring to examine the books upon subjects they were investigating; that there was great deficiency of light and air; that parts of the building were damp; "that its sanitary conditions and domestic arrangements," according to the report of the Trustees, were "defective to a degree not merely annoying, but discreditable;" and that, furthermore, the building and its contents, instead of being secure against fire, was so *insecure* that great precautions were necessary for their safety. Its chief deficiency, however, was its limited storage capacity, for the Library had increased in 1872 to more than two hundred thousand volumes and one hundred thousand pamphlets, and was increasing so fast that it was apparent the building would soon be unable to hold it. That time has arrived, for the Library has now nearly half a million books, and almost as many pamphlets. It should have facilities for at least five hundred *readers* who would daily visit it, instead of one hundred and fifty, and for fifty *students*, the present building having scarcely any conveniences for the latter.

It seems strange that, after all the faithful

efforts of the Commissioners, the Library should be found so soon wanting in these many essential features; but everything grows so rapidly and assumes such large proportions in this age of progress that it is often difficult for one generation to gauge the demands and necessities of another. As population and wealth increase, and the arts and sciences develop, our wants, material and moral, so multiply that luxuries and superfluities soon become needs and necessities. We ought to study, therefore, to make our economies conform to probable conditions, and with prescience adopt a policy which anticipates the wants of the future.

I regret to say that such has not always been our way of doing things here. It is remarkable that Boston, ever more than abreast of other communities in thought and action touching all the great questions, religious, moral, political, scientific, literary, and philanthropic, which interest thinking minds,—Boston, which shows so much intelligent forecast in most matters of public concern, is too often contented to provide for the present, without proper consideration of the demands which her constant and rapid growth makes necessary. We seem reluctant to believe that the city is to be a metropolis, and make no

adequate disposition for such contingency. Our public buildings, the buildings erected for business purposes, and the accommodations of our various literary, charitable, and other institutions, our school-houses, railroad stations, streets, and squares, are all planned and constructed^{*} to satisfy only immediate wants,—apparently on the principle that sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. Whenever the progressive few, animated by the spirit of a Quincy, raise their voices in behalf of measures of prospective benefit, they are regarded with distrust, and branded as *Utopians*, by our short-sighted but well-meaning conservatives, who pop up in opposition on all such occasions, alarmed for the safety of the city. Like their Celtic prototype, they cannot understand why we should do anything for posterity, since posterity has done nothing for us.

These apprehensive citizens are not without public spirit; they have, without doubt, the good of Boston at heart and desire her prosperity, but their timidity and contracted views have retarded her progress. They may be wise in their generation, but not of the children of light. Had they had less control in our early municipal history, our city would have to-day better accommodations for its business and more con-

veniences for its citizens. We should have saved the many millions we have spent, and the many millions we must spend, in widening and extending our streets, and enlarging and reconstructing our public buildings. If we had had more Quincys to prepare Boston for her future, she would have been even more beautiful than she now is, with vastly greater facilities for her enterprising merchants and bankers.

Permit me to illustrate our penny-wise-and-pound-foolish policy by a few examples.

Our City Hall, built less than twenty-five years ago, described in the address of Mr. Winthrop as "convenient and comfortable," and considered by our conservative citizens when dedicated as unnecessarily capacious, is now most inconvenient, uncomfortable, and incapacious, hardly accommodating half of the departments of the city government.

Our "massive Court-house," which the builders thought would accommodate all the courts — city, county, state, and federal — until the Greek calends, is so small and deficient in the conveniences demanded by the times and the increased business of the courts, that years ago it came near being indicted as a nuisance, and the Legislature intervening, ordered another

Court-house of proper size and character to be built.

Our Latin School-house, on Bedford street, was considered when built amply sufficient for all pupils, present and future, who would attend it; but not many years after its erection it was found so small that it became necessary to quarter a considerable number of the scholars elsewhere. When a new school-house was projected, the provident officials having the matter in charge determined to anticipate the future increase of the school, and the present capacious building was designed; but, as usual, the opponents of progress interposed their objections, claiming that it was much too large, and that there would never be pupils enough to fill it. But the increase of the school has vindicated the wisdom of those who planned it; and, capacious as it is, there is more reason to fear it will be found too small than too large.

I have seen station after station built by our railroad companies, because they could not believe that the passenger and freight business would increase, and demand increased accommodations. It has been said that a surgical operation is required to get a joke into the head of a Scotchman, and it would seem a task of

equal difficulty to inject into those who provide facilities for our fast-increasing population and business a realizing sense of what is needed.

We all remember the reluctance of Boston to recognize the value and necessity of parks for crowded cities, not merely as sources of pleasure, but for their sanitary benefits, for they become reservoirs for the storage of fresh air so necessary for the public health. Many of our public-spirited citizens and sanitarians from time to time strongly urged the city to act in the matter, when the required lands could be had at comparatively small cost ; but years of delay were allowed to go by before the argument in behalf of parks was appreciated, and when our park system was finally adopted we were obliged to pay vastly more than we should had we moved early, because land had greatly risen in value.

But a different spirit is now obtaining, and a different policy will, I think, hereafter control in municipal affairs. Boston is to be more metropolitan. Progress is not to be retarded in the future, as in the past, by doubts and fears. We have evidence of this in the liberal provision of our City Council for the new Library building. Its wise foresight has generously pro-

vided for the future, as well as the present. No complaint can be made by those who come after us, that all the wants of this great educational institution have not been anticipated and supplied. Whatever improvements in the Library arrangements experience may hereafter suggest, its *storage* capacity will never be deficient, as it will accommodate two millions of books, and all the readers and students in the Commonwealth who may wish to use them.

This is as it should be, for this Library is a *free* library for all the people, not only of the city, but of the state.

Mr. Everett, in his address at the dedication of the Boylston-street building, has so well stated the leading object of this institution, that I beg leave to quote him: "It is," he says, "to give to the entire population, not merely to the curious student, but to the inquisitive member of either of the professions, to the intelligent merchant, mechanic, engineer, artist, or artisan; in short, to all of every age, and of either sex, who desire to investigate any subject, either of utility or taste, those advantages which, without such an ample public collection, must necessarily be monopolized by the proprietors of large private libraries, or those who, by cour-

tesy, have the use of them ; nay, to put within the reach of the entire community advantages of this kind far beyond those which can be afforded by the largest and best provided private libraries."

It was, therefore, to be a free public library in the largest sense. And I would here draw your attention to the fact that this institution was the first among great libraries in the world to allow its books to *circulate among the people*. Hitherto, in all such libraries, here and abroad, readers were restricted to the use of the books in the rooms and cloisters of the library buildings. None could be taken to their homes. Few, therefore, comparatively, read them, and the value of such institutions was greatly impaired. It is the pride and glory of Boston that in establishing this Library she inaugurated a different policy. All her citizens, under trifling conditions, can now read its books in their dwellings. This new departure has been most successful in its results. The daily circulation of books is immense. Their loss and injury are very slight, and the general character of the reading justifies the belief that its influence is wholesome and salutary.

It is gratifying to know that the wise example thus set by Boston has been largely followed in this and other countries, so that our citizens may justly claim that, in establishing this free public Library, they are entitled to a place among the benefactors of mankind.

This feature of *freeness* led Mr. Joshua Bates, one of the earliest, as well as one of the greatest, benefactors of the institution, when making his first munificent donation of fifty thousand dollars for the purchase of books, to impose thereto the conditions that the Library building should be an "*ornament* to the city, have room for one hundred to one hundred and fifty persons to sit at reading-tables, and that it should be perfectly *free* to all, with no other restrictions than may be necessary for the preservation of the books."

The public-spirited men who originated the scheme of a library for the people, knowing the character of our people, and their interest in free public instruction, predicted that "it would soon become an object of pride to them, and every one would feel it an honor to do something for it;" and Mr. Bates felt sure "that in a liberal and wealthy community like Boston, there will be no want of friends for it." These

predictions have been fully realized. Each successive city government, faithfully reflecting the sentiments of the people, has made liberal appropriations for it, and showed in every way its desire to do everything necessary to enable it to accomplish to the fullest extent the objects of its organization. The gratitude of all who love learning should obtain for such liberality.

We must not forget at this time the interest which the Commonwealth has felt in our Library and the aid it has given it. Appreciating its value as an educator of the people, the Legislature in 1848 authorized its establishment by the city. In 1853 it granted further powers. In 1857 it removed all limitations to the appropriations the city might make for its maintenance. In 1878, in watchful care of the interests of the institution, it conferred corporate powers, with authority to take and hold real and personal estate to the extent of one million of dollars. In 1880 the Commonwealth, recognizing its need of greater accommodations, as the Library had increased immensely, and appreciating its value to all the people in the state, gave with grateful liberality a large tract of valuable land, containing about thirty-three thousand square feet, for the site of a new building, and afterwards

authorized the city to take, by purchase or otherwise, as much adjoining land as it might think necessary for the ample accommodation of the Library. In 1887 it further expressed its interest in the institution by giving the Trustees full control of the design, construction, erection, and maintenance of the new building.

The Trustees are grateful for the confidence thus reposed in them by the state, and grateful, also, for the approval of their designs for the new building by the City Council, and the generous appropriation made for the commencement of the work. They indulge the hope that when they apply to the treasury for such further sums as will be needed in its prosecution, the action of the government will show that this confidence has not abated. They are serving without pecuniary compensation, actuated solely by the desire of promoting the interests of an institution which will be of great benefit to Boston, and largely add to her honor and fame.

When the edifice is completed, if the citizens shall feel that the important trust reposed in them has been faithfully executed, their time and labor will be fully requited.

The location of the new building was well chosen, for it is central and convenient for all

the citizens. It contains about seventy thousand square feet of land. With the large open space which makes Copley square in front, with wide streets on its northerly and southerly sides, with the rear defended by the grounds and walls of the medical college, and with a large open court—one hundred and thirty-three feet long and one hundred feet wide—in the centre of the lot, the Library will not only be well protected against fire, but assured of abundance of light and air which can never be obstructed. This large area will afford exceptional opportunities for reading and study, as no intrusions can disturb the peace and quiet essential for the full enjoyment of what Milton calls

“The perpetual feast of nectared sweets,
Where no crude surfeit reigns,”

to be found in books.

The near vicinity of three beautiful churches,—Trinity church, the Second church, and this noble church of the Old South Society (*esto perpetua*),—with the pleasing edifice where art is gathering its charming treasures, make an atmosphere—a *religio loci*—in full harmony with this great public educational institution.

The Trustees have kept constantly in mind that the primary requirements of the building are safety against fire, and proper accommodations for the books and those who use them; but in so doing they have not forgotten the wish of our generous benefactor, Mr. Bates, "that the Public Library building might be an *ornament* to Boston." It will be such. It is to be constructed of light Milford granite, having a slightly rose hue,—a beautiful stone, and most appropriate to this climate. The designs made by those accomplished architects, Messrs. McKim, Mead, & White, have been generally approved by our citizens, and I may say that those who are considered critics in æsthetic matters highly commend them.

The edifice is somewhat plain and simple in its general character, but classic in tone and spirit, as a structure for library purposes should be; for all, I think, will admit that the architecture of a building should suggest the purposes of its erection. The objective should symbolize the subjective.

It represents the Florentine style which marked the period of Italian renaissance. If the *façades* do not show the beautiful forms of the elegant Ionic or rich Corinthian,—which are best ex-

pressed in marble,—they are not wanting in those graceful lines and pleasing curves which characterized architecture when the revival of letters awoke the slumbers of classic art.

It has been said that architecture is an art which unites in a singular manner the useful and the beautiful. We have in the designs a charming specimen of this union. Utility is not sacrificed to beauty, nor beauty to utility. The claims of both have equal recognition, thus producing a result which would have satisfied the artistic taste of our great statesman, Webster, who “hoped to see our granite reposing in the ever-enduring strength of the Doric, or springing up in the grand and lofty Gothic, in forms which beauty and utility, the eye and the judgment, taste and devotion, shall unite to approve and to admire, so that our city shall be celebrated as the city of architectural excellence.”

We are assembled to perform the interesting ceremony of laying the corner-stone of this temple, which will be dedicated to the cause of free popular education. It will make an important event in our annals.

Boston, from the day when it was organized as a body politic, has always felt the greatest solicitude for the moral and intellectual education

of her people. There is now little doubt, from the evidence which has been disclosed, that it was the object and "settled purpose" of the early colonists in coming here, not only to get religious liberty, but "direct independence of the English Crown and positive sovereignty;" and they early saw "that they must found their Commonwealth on the only basis on which a republic has any hope of happiness or continuance, — the general information of the people."

They were right. It cannot be otherwise. If government rests directly on the popular will, that will must be guided by intelligence, or the government will fall, as surely as the beautiful edifice whose foundations we lay to-day, when those foundations shall crumble and decay. Republican institutions cannot exist when the people are not fitted for them, and they *will* exist when they *are* fitted for them.

Beyond question the general intelligence of the people was a potent factor of success in our struggle for independence of the British Crown. The colonists knew their rights, and this knowledge aroused the spirit and begot the determination to maintain them.

Burke, with his keen insight into the causes of historic events, asserts, in his great speech on

Conciliation with America, that "the education of the colonists caused the growth of that fierce spirit of freedom which made them so acute in seeing the effect of political measures on their civil rights." He says, "That while in other countries the people, more simple, judge of an ill principle in government only by an actual grievance, in America they anticipate the evil, and judge of the pressure of the grievance by the badness of the principle. They augur misgovernment at a distance, and snuff the approach of tyranny in every tainted breeze."

The framers of the Constitution inherited from the colonists their faith touching the value of popular education, and its importance as a conservative force to the state, and declared in the Bill of Rights "That wisdom and knowledge, as well as virtue, diffused generally among the people, being necessary for the preservation of their rights and liberties, and as these depend on spreading the opportunities and advantages of education among the people, *it should be the duty of legislatures and magistrates in all future periods of this Commonwealth to cherish the interests of literature and the sciences and all seminaries of them.*"

This duty makes a grave and solemn respon-

sibility, and has been faithfully performed, for Massachusetts was the first political community known to history which recognized the duty of government to provide for the instruction of youth; she was the first to provide in her organic constitution and laws for the education of the whole population from the general treasury; and the first to secure this right of free education by enforcing penalties. Our Commonwealth in all this has a proud and glorious record.

Let me say that our city has also fully responded to this admonition and charge of the framers of the Constitution to cherish the institutions of learning. During all her history, and especially her municipal history, she has contributed most liberally to the support of school-houses and schools, and encouraged in every way the diffusion of knowledge. She has withheld nothing which could improve her educational system, and increase its efficiency; she has been especially liberal to the free Public Library — recognizing its value as an ally of the public schools in the education of the people; and it may be asserted, without fear of contradiction, that no community has given and gives greater encouragement to learning by honoring those who

have become distinguished in literature, in art, and in science.

As the diffusion of knowledge did so much in establishing republican institutions, it will be found equally potent as a conservative force in perpetuating them. All mundane things are finite ; but it may be safely said, while the people are informed and intelligent, they will find in the knowledge which comes from education, and in the virtues which are ever its concomitants, a power which will long retard the disintegrations of time, and keep alive the spirit of liberty, which makes the essence of all free institutions.

We owe, therefore, a vast debt of gratitude to the fathers who prepared by education the people for self-government, organized the free body-politic, and devised the system of free public instruction for its preservation. They thus earned the high praise of the great Roman orator and statesman, — that those who *preserve*, as well as those who found, a commonwealth, exhibit virtues which may be said to approach the divine.

No argument is needed to vindicate the right of the state to *compel* the education of the people. As self-preservation has been called the first law of nature, society is entitled to defend

itself against all enemies, whether those enemies are ignorance, intemperance, the destructive spirit of anarchy, the disorganizing spirit of communism, bigotry of whatever sort and sect, or any of the vices hostile to good government and good morals. These enemies are closely related, and ignorance is the parent of most of them.

It is our duty, then, to do all we can for the diffusion of knowledge. The safety of Ilium depended upon the preservation of the statue of the goddess of *Wisdom* and the liberal arts. So the safety of the Republic depends upon the preservation of our seminaries of learning. Count, therefore, all as hostile to liberty and the people who would destroy or disturb our system of free popular education. Let them find no favor in this community.

I have spoken of the value to the state as a conservative force of the diffusion of knowledge. Permit me a word touching its value to the people in the daily work of life. The great mass of mankind live by physical labor, and must do so. Skilled labor has vastly the advantage over unskilled labor. "Knowledge is power," Bacon tells us, and there is no calling or employment in which knowledge, more or less, is not required for its successful prosecution. As civiliza-

tion advances, and science reveals its principles for art to apply in its countless creations, the wants of man rapidly augment; but labor cannot expect employment for the supply of these wants, unless it be intelligent and skilled. He, therefore, who would better his condition, and raise himself to places above that of the hewer of wood and drawer of water, must get knowledge, must cultivate his mind, and store it with useful learning. Here is the road to success, and as the body is strengthened by muscular exercise, the mind is strengthened by study. History tells us that the first-known library was created by an Egyptian king, and was called by him "the storehouse of medicine for the mind." If the founder meant by medicine merely that restorative which

"Can minister to a mind diseased,
And cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart,"

he might have given the institution a broader definition, for books are not only mental medicine, but mental *aliment*. They cure the maladies which weigh upon the heart, but they also nourish and invigorate the intellectual faculties; and as these grow, the power to overcome

obstacles and achieve results also grows, so that it would be difficult to fix the limit of accomplishment for him who has the will and the courage to work.

There is less difference in the intellectual powers of mankind than we suppose. Study, will-power, and that valuable art, the *art of using the mind*, are the great factors of success. It required strong muscles and trained skill to bend the bow of Ulysses.

But there are higher motives for study than the help we get from knowledge in the struggle for the prizes of life. We should educate ourselves because it is our *duty* to do so. Man's grand distinction is his mental capacity, and in this age, when thought is so active and so aspiring; when the fields of knowledge are so vast; when so many secrets of the moral, intellectual, and physical world are revealing; when so many questions affecting the progress of civilization and the highest interests of humanity are disputed; when so much of ancient doctrine touching religion, duty, science, and government is being reviewed and examined,—we should equip ourselves to take some part in this intellectual revival. It is not now creditable to be ignorant.

“Sure He that made us with such large discourse
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason,
To fust in us unused.”

All may not become great scholars and learned pundits, but all may acquire more or less of that knowledge which is becoming “the elevated rank and the dignity of reasoning beings.”

It is the duty of man not only to learn, but to learn as long as he remains here; and without doubt it will be also his duty and destiny to continue to learn through all the countless ages of eternity.

I might speak of the delights of learning, and of books, upon which so much has been eloquently said in all times and in all languages; but these remarks are already too extended, and reluctantly I forego doing so.

Let us hope that this institution will long continue its useful work; that the knowledge it diffuses will ever advance the cause of moral, religious, and scientific truth, and not corrupt nor pervert it. Such knowledge is not forbidden, as it brings life, and not death; and no cherubim with flaming swords will withhold it from those who seek it.

It is said that the beautiful temples and por-

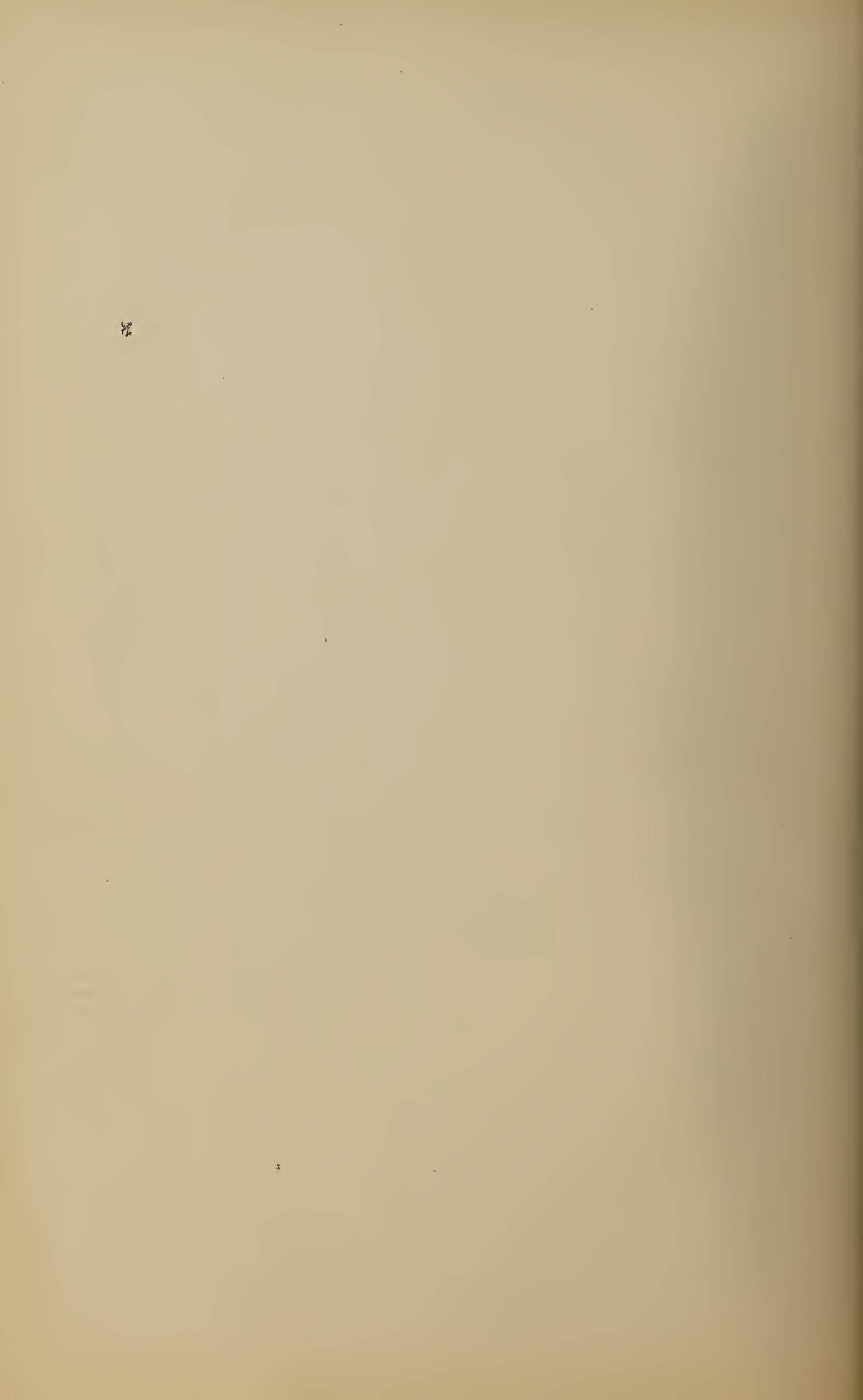


tics of Athens, where the followers of Socrates and Plato so often disputed, saved the city of the violet crown from the vengeance of the Roman conqueror who had devoted it to destruction, thus forgiving the living in his reverence for the dead.

Perhaps in the distant future some conquering enemy may withhold his destroying hand from our beloved city in reverent regard for the beautiful temple whose foundations we this day lay, and its precious treasures of letters and art; for I trust the structure will be made complete and consummate with the noble statuary which has been designed for its adornment.

Mr. Mayor, you have been the constant friend of the Free Public Library, as you have been the constant friend of our free public schools. In office and out of office your interest in it has never abated. Ever ready to appreciate its needs, you have done all in your power to supply them. It is fitting, therefore, and appropriate that you should take the chief part in the placing of the corner-stone of this magnificent edifice. The Trustees invite you to do so, and for the purpose present you this trowel.

At the conclusion of his address MR. PRINCE delivered to HIS HONOR MAYOR O'BRIEN the silver trowel, which was beautifully chased and appropriately inscribed, for the completion of the ceremony of laying the corner-stone. Thereupon the Mayor made the following address.



ADDRESS

OF

HIS HONOR MAYOR HUGH O'BRIEN.

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HIS HONOR MAYOR HUGH O'BRIEN.

January 1, 1858, was a memorable day for Boston. On that day the new Public Library building, on Boylston street, was dedicated in the presence of a large audience. The corner-stone was laid on the seventeenth day of September, 1855, and on the first day of January, 1858, the completed building was dedicated, — a little more than two years after the corner-stone was laid. In the language of that day, quoting from the printed volume giving an account of the dedication, "Never in the history of the city have the portals of any of its edifices been opened to the public with more joy, or with greater promise of future usefulness and prospects of real benefit to the whole community, than in this instance; for, with a liberality unsurpassed

by that of any of the other large cities of America, Boston, on New Year's day, gave to her citizens one of the most precious gifts within her power of bestowal, — a noble building for the most free library in the world." The commissioners who had charge of the Library building were: —

Hon. Robert C. Winthrop, President; Samuel G. Ford, Hon. Nathaniel B. Shurtleff, Hon. Edward Everett, Pelham Bonney, Joseph A. Pond, and William Parkman. The Hon. Edward Everett was also President of the Board of Trustees. It will be noticed that among the commissioners on the erection of the Library building were some of Boston's most distinguished and well-known citizens, and it is no wonder that our Public Library, commencing its work under such auspices, has marvellously increased and prospered during the thirty years of its existence.

At that time some 60,000 volumes, from four different places of temporary deposit, found a resting-place in the new building. This was a remarkable beginning thirty years ago, but its remarkable growth in a generation has far surpassed the anticipations of its founders. The principal donors of these 60,000 volumes were

Joshua Bates, Jonathan Phillips, Abbott Lawrence, Edward Everett, George Ticknor, John P. Bigelow; and the generosity of these men has been followed by a long list of benefactors, indicating that our free Public Library has always stood high, and now stands high, in the estimation of our citizens.

The 60,000 volumes in 1858 has increased to near 500,000 volumes in 1888. What a wonderful increase! A generation only has passed away, and that generation has built up the largest free Public Library in the world. All honor to the living and the dead who have been engaged in this noble work!

The Hon. Robert C. Winthrop, then in the prime of manhood, the only member of the commission now living, — and I know that I express the heartfelt wish of every citizen of Boston, and I might say of the citizens of the entire country, for our Winthrop has a national reputation, that his life may be spared for many years to come, — delivered the opening address on presenting the keys to the Mayor.

Allow me to quote briefly from that address, before an audience that completely packed the building, for it would be impossible to find more appropriate language: —

"Welcome, fathers and mothers of our city; welcome, young ladies and children of the schools; welcome, lovers and patrons of literature and learning, of science and the arts; welcome, friends to good manners and good morals, and to those innocent recreations and ennobling pursuits by which alone vulgarity and vice can be supplanted; welcome, pastors and teachers of our churches and colleges; welcome, rulers and magistrates of our city, of our Commonwealth, and of our whole country !

"Welcome, citizens and residents of Boston, one and all, to our edifice, which is destined, we trust, to furnish a resort in many an hour of leisure, and in many an hour of study, not for yourselves alone, but for those who shall come after you through countless generations !"

Such were the eloquent words of Winthrop in 1858. The Library then dedicated was to be a resort not only for the citizens of that day, but for countless generations. I am not surprised at this language. The Library building erected on Boylston street was, in its day, compared with other public buildings, a large, commodious, and elegant structure. I am not surprised that it then appeared large enough, with a capacity of about 300,000 volumes, to

accommodate our citizens for many generations to come; but to the credit of our city be it said, that the demand on our Library has been such that for some years it has been altogether inadequate to accommodate the public, and to-day we put in position the corner-stone of a new and enlarged building, and I am satisfied the citizens of Boston could not be engaged in a more noble work. What another generation may bring about, it is, perhaps, useless to predict. Our city is growing rapidly in population and wealth, and from the success of our free Library, and the establishment of other free libraries in the leading cities and towns of the country, I am also satisfied there is a corresponding increase in intelligence and knowledge. Our growth has been so rapid during these thirty years, there is one thing we should not forget. We must build not only for the present, but also for the future, and I am satisfied that the new building will fully realize our expectations.

The Trustees of the Public Library have an important duty to perform, and I feel that the work now intrusted to them will be faithfully performed.

Mr. Joshua Bates, the principal benefactor of our Public Library, when presenting his magnifi-

cent gift to the city, made a condition, "that it should be free to all, with no other restrictions than are necessary for the preservation of the books." He also expressed the wish that the building shall be an ornament to the city. I believe, and have always maintained, that while its interior should be arranged with all modern appliances for the accommodation of students, scholars, and others who seek its treasures, and for the delivery of books, its exterior should be the most attractive building in the city. I am satisfied that our taxpayers will not find fault with the cost, if the building comes up to this standard.

Gentlemen of the Board of Trustees, I hope the work will now rapidly proceed to completion. I have only one more suggestion to make. If the Hon. Robert C. Winthrop, who delivered the address on the dedication of the Library building on Boylston street, is alive and well when this new structure is completed,—and we all hope and pray he will be,—that he should be requested to deliver the address on the dedication of the new structure, which I feel, in the words he used thirty years ago, "will be the resort of our citizens for generations to come."

The Benediction was then given by DR. GORDON, and the audience, led by the Mayor, proceeded to the north-east corner of the Library lot, where the corner-stone was duly placed in position, and the exercises closed.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

DESCRIPTION OF THE CORNER – STONE AND OF THE BOXES, PLATE, AND OTHER ARTICLES DEPOSITED UNDER IT.

The corner-stone, a block of white Milford granite, with a slightly rose hue, has the following dimensions : —

Length	4 feet, 10 inches.
Width	3 “ 9 “
Height	1 foot, 10 “

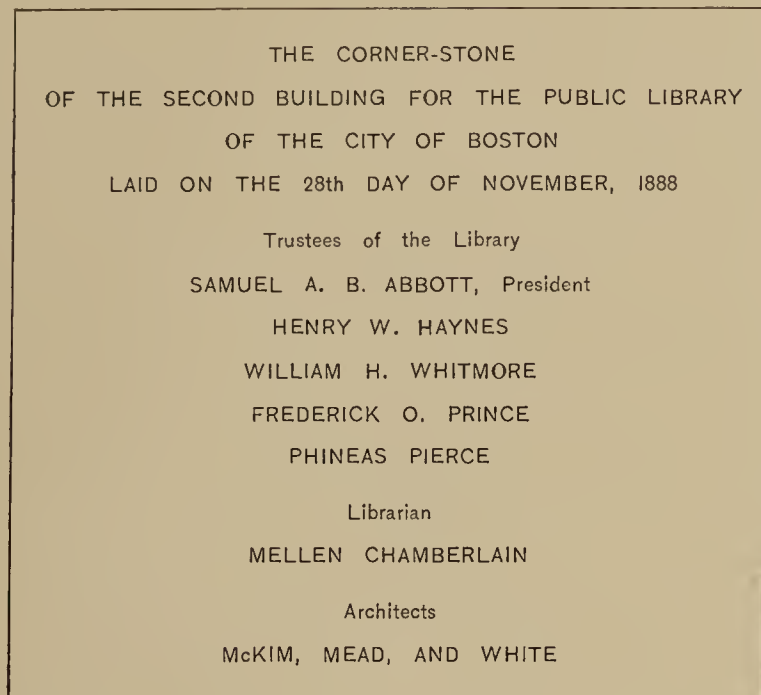
It was laid at the north-east corner of the foundations. Within the cavities of the lower face of the stone were placed two copper boxes, of the following dimensions : —

Length	16 inches.
Width	12 “
Height	6 “

In these boxes, the covers of which were securely soldered, were the following articles : —

ARTICLES DEPOSITED UNDER THE CORNER-STONE.

1. Proceedings at the Laying of the Corner-stone. Public Library of the City of Boston, Sept. 17, 1855.
2. Proceedings at dedication of the Building for the Public Library, Jan. 1, 1858.
3. Acts and ordinances relating to the Public Library, together with the By-laws of the Corporation, 1887, and Hand-book for Readers, containing the regulations of the Library. New edition, 1883.
4. Extracts from the records of the Trustees of the Public Library of the City of Boston relating to the new Library building on Copley square, from March 22, 1887, to Oct. 25, 1888.
5. Heliotype plans of the new Public Library Building.
6. Annual reports, Boston Public Library, 1877-87.
7. All forms used in administering the Library.
8. Boston municipal register, 1888.
9. City auditor's report, 1887-88.
10. Report of the School Committee, 1887.
11. Boston Directory, 1888.
12. Ancient and Honorable Artillery Co. bronze medal commemorative of their 250th anniversary.
13. Invitation and ticket of admission and order of exercises, Nov. 28, 1888.
14. Poem by Dr. O. W. Holmes; addresses by the Hon. Frederick O. Prince and His Honor the Mayor, Hugh O'Brien.
15. Photographs of the Trustees, of Wm. W. Greenough, Esq., of His Honor the Mayor, of the Common Council.
16. The silver plate bearing this inscription:—



A box containing a copy of all the newspapers and periodicals published in Boston, about 250 in number.

FROM CORNER-STONE TO CORNER-STONE.

The corner-stone of the edifice on Boylston street now occupied by the Boston Public Library was laid Sept. 17, 1855; and that of the edifice now erecting on Copley square, Nov. 28, 1888, a period of thirty-three years, two months, and eleven days intervening. At the first event, the City Government, with the Trustees of the Library, the Benefactors of the Institution, the past Commissioners, and many other invited guests, assembled at the City Hall at half-past three o'clock P. M., and thence, under the marshalship of George W. Messenger, Esq., Chairman of the Committee of Arrangements, proceeded to Boylston street, where prayer was offered by Rev. Edward N. Kirk, D.D., and a hymn, written for the occasion by the Hon. George Lunt, was

sung by the pupils of the Girls' High and Normal School, under the direction of Mr. H. L. Southard. Then followed an address by the Hon. Robert C. Winthrop, President of the Board of Commissioners for the erection of the Library building.

In closing his address, Mr. Winthrop, in behalf of the Commissioners, presented a trowel of burnished steel to His Honor the Mayor, Jerome V. C. Smith, who made a suitable reply, and then proceeded to lay the corner-stone, in the immediate presence of the Commissioners, the Trustees, the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, and the Hon. Jonathan Phillips, one of the principal benefactors of the Library. The CXVIIth Psalm was then sung, and the Rev. E. S. Gannett, D.D., pronounced the benediction.

What took place at the laying of the corner-stone of the new Public Library Building is set forth in the preceding pages, and need not be repeated here.

A brief outline of the history of the Library between 1855 and 1888 is as follows: The Public Library opened in Mason street, May 2, 1854, with Edward Capen as its librarian. Sept. 17, 1855, it contained 22,047 volumes, and Nov. 28, 1888, the date of laying the second corner-stone, 509,531 volumes. At the first period the number of borrowers was 8,858, and at the second, 51,645. During the same period the circulation has increased from 81,000 to 1,013,847 volumes; and the expenses of the institution, from \$10,759.95 to \$123,500.

The Hon. Edward Everett was President of the Board of Trustees from 1852 until his death, Jan. 17, 1865, when he was succeeded by George Ticknor, Esq., who held the office until his resignation of the same, June 26, 1866. William W. Greenough, Esq., was president from July 24, 1866, to

April 2, 1888, when he resigned his trusteeship, and Samuel A. B. Abbott, Esq., was elected president in his place May 12.

Prof. Charles C. Jewett succeeded Mr. Capen as librarian in 1857, with the title of superintendent, and held the office until his death, Jan. 9, 1868. Justin Winsor was elected his successor the following February 25, and resigned Oct. 1, 1877. The Library was then put in charge of Dr. Samuel A. Green, one of the Trustees, until their incorporation by an act of the General Court, April 4, 1878. He acted as librarian, as the chief executive officer was then called, until Oct. 1, 1878, when Mellen Chamberlain, the present librarian, entered upon his office, having been elected thereto August 25.

As a city institution the expense of its maintenance falls upon the municipality, and is met by an annual appropriation. In addition to that appropriation, there is the income of funds created by gift, now amounting to \$171,700, though \$50,000 of that sum is not yet available. From Sept. 17, 1855, to Nov. 28, 1888, these funds increased by \$110,700, through the generosity of twelve donors.

Bates Hall, as the upper hall was called after the death of Joshua Bates, Sept. 24, 1864, was opened in 1861, with 74,000 volumes, which have now increased to 302,127. The growth of the more distinctively popular part of the Library, after its removal to Boylston street, and at the branches, is as follows: The lower hall was first opened in the present building Dec. 20, 1858. In 1868 the City Council authorized the establishment of branch libraries, and the following branches, reading-rooms, and delivery stations have been set up: East Boston, January, 1871; Roxbury, in connection with the Fellowes Athenæum, January, 1872; at South Boston, May 18,

the same year; at Charlestown and Brighton, by annexation, Jan. 6, 1874; Dorchester, by annexation, Jan. 18, 1875; at South End, in August, and at Jamaica Plain, in September, 1877. Delivery stations were opened in June, 1875, at the Lower Mills; Roslindale, Dec. 3, 1878; at West Roxbury, Jan. 6, 1880; at Mattapan, Dec. 27, 1881; at the North End, October, 1882; at Neponset, Jan. 1, 1883; and Mt. Bowdoin, Nov. 1, 1886.

It was expected that the present Library building would afford ample accommodations for its contents, and their reasonable use by the public, for many years; but as early as 1867 the Examining Committee called the attention of the Trustees to the lack of light and of proper ventilation of the building as well as of working accommodations.

These complaints were continued from year to year, and several expedients were adopted for the reception and preservation of the collections.

The necessity for a new building was recognized by the Trustees in 1870, and they passed an order, on February 16 of that year, requesting one of their number to examine various estates for this purpose. The most favorable site was thought to be the lot of land on Tremont street adjoining the Clarendon Hotel. Another order was passed Feb. 23, 1870, with a view to securing an estate on the same street known as Smith's organ factory. On November 1 of the same year it was voted to indefinitely postpone the subject; but the question was reopened March 14, 1871, by referring the subject of change in the present building, and of a new site, to a Committee of the Trustees.

From this time the idea of a new Library building seems to have been dropped, and instead thereof an enlargement of the edifice was proposed.

This was done by the alterations in Bates Hall, September, 1871, by which the lateral alcoves were divided and lighted. This relief was temporary, and the Trustees contemplated the extension of the building on Boylston street, and at their suggestion the Richardson estate was purchased by the city in July, 1872. In June, 1874, the erection of the south-west wing was begun, and finished in March, 1875. Besides rooms for two special collections, the accommodations furnished by this addition were chiefly for the convenience of the Trustees and working departments of the Library; in April, 1876, the exterior gallery at the rear was added. An appeal was made to the General Court for a grant of land on Copley square, which was favorably responded to by an act approved April 22, 1880, giving 33,000 square feet of land to the city. The condition annexed to its grant by the State was that a suitable building should be begun in the course of three years, —which time was extended, in 1883, for a further term of the same duration.

The first order looking to a new structure on the Dartmouth-street estate was passed Dec. 1, 1881. By this the Committee on the Public Library were authorized to consult the Trustees concerning a new Library building, and preparation for the work was made by the City Architect by visits to and examinations of some of the newer library buildings in Europe.

The next step for providing new quarters for the Library was an order of the City Council, passed on the 9th of March, 1882: —

That the Trustees of the Public Library be requested to report upon the fitness of the present High and Latin School building for the purposes of a Public Library.

After a careful examination it was decided, and so reported to the City Council, that this structure, neither in part nor as a whole, was fit for the uses of the Public Library.

By an act approved April 10, 1882, the city was authorized to take additional land belonging to private parties.

The City Architect then prepared drawings showing how the largest and most convenient access by readers and students could be accomplished.

The plans prepared by the City Architect were approved by the Trustees, but in transmitting their vote to the City Council they recommended the taking of the land fronting on Dartmouth street and St. James avenue, adjacent to the lot given by the Commonwealth agreeably to the provisions of the above-mentioned act.

On the 5th of March, 1883, the Committee on the Public Library reported in favor of the recommendation of the Trustees, and submitted orders for the purchase of the land on St. James avenue for \$180,000, and the erection of a building for the sum of \$450,000; payment for the same to be made through the medium of a public loan for \$630,000. The orders thus reported received the approval of the Mayor on April 14, 1882, and on the 21st April the city authorities took formal possession of the land given by the Commonwealth, and also of the estates on St. James avenue, in all about 66,000 square feet. On the 13th August a letter was addressed to the Board of Trustees by the chairman of the Committee on the Public Library, desiring to obtain their views upon the subject. A statement of the principal features which the Trustees desired to have incorporated in the plan of the new building, particularly with reference to the interior arrangements, was issued early in January, 1884, and four

prizes were offered for the best plans. The time allowed for competitive designs to be sent in was subsequently extended from 1st of June to 1st of August of the same year, at which date there had been received twenty sets of plans under the specifications issued by the joint committee, whose powers and duties had expired with the City Government of that year, and had not been renewed.

On Jan. 3, 1885, the Trustees and the City Architect were made a commission to award the four prizes offered. After due deliberation, the Commission, on Jan. 13, 1885, in transmitting the award to the City Council, expressed the opinion that no one of the plans was suitable to build upon.

An order of the City Government dated March 30, 1885, directed that the City Architect prepare the plans for the new building, and submit them to the Trustees of the Public Library for their approval. No greater progress was made in two years than the laying of the foundations, and on March 10, 1887, an act was passed by the General Court giving the Trustees full power and control of the design and construction of the new building, and authority to select an architect.

On March 30, 1887, the Trustees contracted with Messrs. McKim, Mead, & White to design and supervise the construction of the new building, and plans were finally prepared and approved by the Trustees, and the existing foundations were modified so as to conform to them.

With the balance of the amount appropriated by the city at their disposition they contracted with Messrs. Woodbury & Leighton, Aug. 1, 1888, for the building of the basement and first floor within one year, relying upon the City Government to appropriate sufficient to complete the edifice.

By extra labor, the contractors forwarded the work so that the corner-stone was laid, as has been said, on the 28th of November, 1888. The events subsequent to that date do not form a part of this sketch from Corner-Stone to Corner-Stone; but it may be said in general terms that everything seems propitious to the speedy completion of the new building.

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